

Assembly Bill No. 2559

CHAPTER 216

An act to add Section 1104.1 to the Military and Veterans Code, relating to veterans, making an appropriation therefor, and declaring the urgency thereof, to take effect immediately.

[Approved by Governor August 14, 2002. Filed with
Secretary of State August 14, 2002.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 2559, Wesson. Veterans' Home of California.

The Veterans' Homes Bond Act of 2000 requires the proceeds from the sale of the bonds issued under that act to be deposited in a newly established Veterans' Home Fund. That act provides that upon appropriation by the Legislature, the moneys in that fund are to be allocated first to meet state funding requirements for the renovation or construction of those veterans' homes identified by a specified statute, and then to fund any additional homes established pursuant to the bond act.

This bill would continuously appropriate the moneys in the Veterans' Home Fund, without regard to fiscal years and in an amount not to exceed \$31,000,000, to meet state funding requirements for the construction of veterans' homes, located in the City of Lancaster and in the community of Saticoy, that are identified by the same specified statute, and a veterans' home located in West Los Angeles, that is an additional home established pursuant to the bond act.

This bill would make various findings and declarations regarding these provisions. The bill would also state the intent of the Legislature in enacting these provisions.

This bill would provide that it would become operative only if AB 2953, SB 1234, and SB 1773 are enacted and become effective on or before January 1, 2003.

This bill would declare that it is to take effect immediately as an urgency statute.

Appropriation: yes.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the following:

(a) With respect to veterans in general, the Legislature finds and declares all of the following:

(1) Over 1,000 United States veterans who fought in World War II die every day.

(2) More veterans live in California than in any other state in the nation. Of the nation's 25,229,000 veterans, 2,367,700 of them live in California, or 9.3 percent. Additionally, 596,500 more veterans live in California than in any other state in the nation.

(3) California has been identified by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs as one of the three states with a "great need" for veterans' homes. The fiscal year 2002 United States Department of Veterans Affairs veterans' home bed analysis lists the current need in California as 3,167 beds.

(4) The highest concentration of veterans are in the 53 to 58 years age range and are Vietnam-era veterans. There are approximately 800,000 Vietnam-era veterans in California who may need care soon.

(5) There are presently 430,800 Korean War-era veterans between the ages of 66 and 75 years in California who are at the prime age to receive care now.

(6) Approximately 18 million of the United States' 25 million veterans served the country during wartime.

(b) With respect to a veterans' home at Lancaster, the Legislature finds and declares all of the following:

(1) There are over 300,000 eligible veterans living in the 60-mile service area of the Lancaster veterans' homesite.

(2) The Antelope Valley boasts a vibrant military community with a rich military and aerospace tradition. Lancaster is in the heart of the Antelope Valley, which is home to Edwards Air Force Base, Air Force Plant 42, NASA Dryden, Phillips Rocket Propulsion Laboratory, Boeing's Phantomworks facility, Northrup-Gruman's B-2 production facility, and the legendary Lockheed Martin Skunkworks facility.

(3) The Lancaster veterans' homesite is within an hour drive of two Veterans Affairs hospitals, and in emergencies, is within a five-mile radius of three acute care hospitals. The Antelope Valley Hospital employs nearly 700 skilled nurses and the Antelope Valley Community College graduates over 200 registered nurses, LVNs, and medical technicians each year.

(c) With respect to a veterans' home at Saticoy, the Legislature finds and declares all of the following:

(1) Ventura County has been home to three major naval installations since the 1940s. Presently, Ventura County is home to Point Mugu Naval Air Station and Port Hueneme United States Naval Construction Battalion Center. Also located near the Saticoy site is Vandenberg Air Force Base in Santa Barbara County, as well as Camp Roberts and Camp San Luis Obispo in San Luis Obispo County.



(2) The Tri-Counties Region supports a veterans' population of 134,000. The Ventura County veterans services organization estimates that there are 70,000 veterans living in Ventura County alone. Another 34,000 veterans reside in Santa Barbara County and 30,000 veterans reside in San Luis Obispo County.

(3) Ventura College has one of the largest nursing programs in the state. Presently, there are 168 students enrolled in the Ventura College nursing program. Oxnard and Moorpark Colleges also have viable nursing programs and are located in Ventura County.

(4) The Saticoy site boasts easy access to a variety of veterans services. The veterans outpatient clinics at Oxnard, Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo, Sepulveda, and the West Los Angeles Veterans Hospital are all in close proximity to the Saticoy site.

(d) With respect to a veterans' home at West Los Angeles, the Legislature finds and declares all of the following:

(1) The Governor's Commission on California Veterans Homes enthusiastically recommends the West Los Angeles veterans' homesite, stating—"It is the majority opinion of the Commission members that the best site in the State for a Veterans Home is located on the property at the Greater Los Angeles Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Los Angeles."

(2) There are 690,600 veterans that presently reside in Los Angeles County. There are more veterans living in Los Angeles County than in San Francisco, San Diego, San Bernardino, Santa Barbara, Riverside, and Ventura Counties combined.

(3) One-third of California's veterans' population resides in either Los Angeles or Orange County. According to the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, the unmet need just for this area is estimated at 1,700 beds.

(4) The Los Angeles site has the potential to become a "Center of Excellence" for the California veterans' home system. The Los Angeles site is located one-half mile from the Veterans Affairs Greater Los Angeles Health Care System (GLAHS). The GLAHS is the largest medical center in the Veterans Affairs health care system and has the broadest range of clinical care, education, and research programs available. The Los Angeles site will showcase a much-needed primary Alzheimer's and dementia care facility. Affiliation with UCLA and USC medical centers assures the highest quality of medical care for Los Angeles veterans' home residents. More than 250 GLAHS staff are UCLA or USC medical faculty members and over 270 UCLA and USC faculty are listed as having primary interest in geriatrics or gerontology.

(5) The population and resources of the metropolitan Los Angeles area provide a large pool of highly qualified staff candidates. The



proposed Veterans' Home, Los Angeles would have access to a pool of excellent candidates for all required support positions, including physicians, nurses, pharmacists, physical therapists, and administrative personnel.

(e) With respect to the need for more veterans' homes in California, the Legislature notes all of the following recommendations of the Governor's Commission on California Veterans Homes:

(1) Recommendation one by the Governor's Commission on California Veterans Homes states: Immediate action is necessary. The commission urges the Governor and the Legislature to take action on construction of veterans homes by building concurrently as many as possible.

(2) Recommendation two by the Governor's Commission on California Veterans Homes states: It is the majority opinion of the commission members that the best site in the state for a veterans home is located on the property at the Greater Los Angeles Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Los Angeles.

(3) Recommendation five by the Governor's Commission on California Veterans Homes states: Build the primary Alzheimer's and dementia care facility at the Greater Los Angeles Veterans Affairs Medical Center.

SEC. 2. (a) It is the intent of the Legislature that:

(1) A veterans' home be built in the communities of Lancaster, Saticoy, and West Los Angeles, as described in Application Number 10-0388, dated April 11, 2002.

(2) In the event modifications to the entire project are needed, those modifications shall in no way lessen the number of beds and adult day care capabilities at the Lancaster and Saticoy facilities, as outlined in Application Number 10-0388, dated April 11, 2002.

(3) If delays occur in one or more of the proposed facilities within the application, it shall not affect the construction schedules, opening, operation, or administration of the other facilities.

(b) It is the further intent of the Legislature to support the expansion of capacity and services at the Lancaster and Saticoy facilities when the demand for services exceeds design capacity.

SEC. 3. Section 1104.1 is added to the Military and Veterans Code, to read:

1104.1. (a) Notwithstanding Section 13340 of the Government Code, the moneys in the Veterans' Home Fund established by Section 1103 are, subject to the limit set forth in subdivision (b), hereby continuously appropriated, without regard to fiscal years, to the Department of Veterans Affairs for the funding of the state's matching requirement for the construction of all of the following:



(1) The Veterans' Home of California, Lancaster, as described in paragraph (4) of subdivision (b) of Section 1011.

(2) The Veterans' Home of California, Saticoy, as described in paragraph (5) of subdivision (b) of Section 1011.

(3) The Veterans' Home of California, West Los Angeles, as provided for in subdivision (a) of Section 1104.

(b) The total amount appropriated in accordance with subdivision (a) may not exceed the sum of thirty-one million dollars (\$31,000,000).

(c) The homes specified in subdivision (a) may care for veterans with substance abuse disorders.

SEC. 4. This act shall become operative only if AB 2953, SB 1234, and SB 1773 are enacted and become effective on or before January 1, 2003.

SEC. 5. This act is an urgency statute necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety within the meaning of Article IV of the Constitution and shall go into immediate effect. The facts constituting the necessity are:

In order to meet the filing date for the eligibility list to receive matching federal funds from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs for the construction of the veterans' homes at Lancaster, Saticoy, and West Los Angeles, it is necessary that this act take effect immediately.

